

DHS Segment Architecture Leading to Human Capital Transformation

Tags: [Human Capital Segment Architecture](#); [portfolio governance](#)

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Completion of our Human Capital Segment Architecture (HCSA), will be our model for conducting segment architectures from now on.

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In previous posts, I have discussed the importance of portfolio governance and described our work at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to implement functionally-oriented portfolios for mission-support and business functions. Recently, we have reached a milestone in that effort: completion of our Human Capital Segment Architecture (HCSA), which will be our model for conducting segment architectures from now on. More than that, and my topic in this discussion, is how the HCSA promises to guide real and lasting transformation in our Human Capital organization.

The HCSA was not an academic exercise but a practical, implementable way forward that combines both strategic and tactical approaches. Our first business-driven segment architecture, the HCSA got underway in November 2010 inThe project involved a core team of DHS Component representatives and Enterprise Architecture experts from CIO all working collaboratively with the Chief Human Capital Office (CHCO) planning team that provided project leadership and analysis support. Oversight of the HCSA project came from the Human Resources Information Technology Executive Steering Committee (HRIT ESC), a governance committee comprised of the Component (e.g., Coast Guard, TSA) CHCOs and CIOs along with the DHS CXOs.

Executing against an aggressive timeline of 10 months, the HCSA effort conducted in-depth analysis, formulated recommendations for executive review, and ultimately created a plan of action to guide DHS HRIT investments and Human Capital business processes for the next five years. The plan identifies several "wins" for near term efficiencies as well as critical longer term improvements to fill automation gaps and reduce redundancy. Previous segment architecture efforts I have been involved with have typically taken much longer to reach this point; it was a tremendous team effort to progress so quickly so DHS is well positioned going into FY12 to make the right things happen in the Human Capital segment.

The things that need to happen are not exclusive to technology either. The HCSA also took an in-depth look at key business processes that when combined with enabling technologies represent the way work is done today. The plan of action cites as many improvement opportunities in business processes as it does in technology. And for the first time, the vision for Human Capital is shared across all DHS Components. The HRIT Strategic Plan targeted for completion next month will reflect the goals and objectives that, over the next five years, will guide the Department's HRIT investments.

The HCSA plan of action addresses key efficiency issues and service improvements in DHS Human Capital by resolving:

- Redundant, disparate, and aging systems investment and operations

- Disjointed and non-interoperable systems and data
- Heavy reliance on paper-based systems
- Declining knowledge base in the HR workforce
- Inconsistent communication and collaboration between HQ and Components
- Poor integration among critical aspects of HR systems and services
- Lack of timely access to accurate data and information at the Departmental level

One of HCSA's key outcomes was a first-ever enterprise view of the current state of Human Capital people, processes, technology, and data. A comprehensive HRIT system inventory revealed many duplicative systems and applications across the Enterprise, many developed in response to technology gaps. The HCSA plan of action will effectively shift a large number of these component-based systems and services to enterprise (DHS) or Federal solutions, reducing redundancy, and driving cost savings.

To maintain the forward momentum of the HCSA effort, actions to continue to mature the governance process began as the HCSA neared completion. The Department's HRIT ESC, which reviewed every stage of the HCSA, will continue to make final decisions on HRIT investments and hold Components accountable for their role in the transformation. Commitment, accountability, and diligence will be required: from executives to make decisions, from HR and IT subject matter experts (SMEs) to collaborate on transformational projects, and from all organizations to operate within the governance guidelines established and execute on the agreed upon plan of action.

The HCSA has been a watershed for expanding HR and IT communication channels between the Department and Components. Never before have the Department's HR and IT communities worked together so closely for such an extended period of time. The long-term impact of this level of close collaboration on the Department's function cannot be overstated. More than 130 DHS employees, including a Core Team of HR and IT thought leaders from every Component, a Planning Team of OCHCO and OCIO staff, plus HR and IT SMEs from across the Department, contributed. The Core Team met regularly face-to-face to validate analysis, share ideas, and explain their systems, making possible a giant leap forward in aligning and coordinating activity between HR and IT across DHS.

So successful was the HCSA that the initiative was honored at the 9th Annual Excellence in Enterprise Architecture Awards on November 8, 2011, receiving the award category for Leadership in Government Transformation Using Enterprise Architecture. These distinguished awards are issued annually by the 1105 Government Information Group in association with the Federated Enterprise Architecture Certification Institute (FEAC) to recognize the impacts of Enterprise Architecture best practices on achieving efficiencies, greater effectiveness, transparency, increased collaboration, and innovation in solutions to government missions outcomes. I offer my congratulations to the team on their outstanding success.

Steve VanRoekel, the new Federal Government CIO, has recently announced his 'Shared First' initiative aimed at rooting out waste and duplication across the Federal IT portfolio. The proper application of segment architecture, bolstered by the proper portfolio governance is critical to the success in identifying and agreeing on shared service and consolidation strategies. I hope the DHS HCSA effort will be leveraged as a 'best practice' approach to implementing 'Shared First' in driving greater government efficiency and effectiveness.